

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Resilience Working Group

St. Petersburg, FL – July 10-11

MEETING SUMMARY

The newly formed Gulf of Mexico Alliance Resilience Working Group met for the first time on July 10-11 in St. Petersburg, Florida. This first meeting took place in conjunction with the Alliance Implementation Conference, providing working group member with an opportunity to learn about the progress of the existing Priority Issue Teams (PITs.) These teams are working to implement the action steps in the Governor's Action Plan. With the addition of the new working group, there are now six teams, each including members from all five Gulf states:

- Habitat Identification
- Water Quality
- Nutrient Reduction
- Regional Restoration and Conservation Team (RRCT)
- Environmental Education
- Community Resilience

Tuesday, July 10th

During the opening plenary, existing teams presented on their priority activities and progress to date. State leaders who make up the Alliance Management Team (AMT) also spoke about the history of the Alliance and about plans for the future. Members of the Federal Working Group (FWG) that provides support to the Alliance complemented all of the teams on their progress, and emphasized the importance of the Alliance as the first regional ocean governance initiative of its kind.

Charge to the Working Group

Following the opening plenary, the Resilience Working Group convened for the first time. (See Appendix A for a list of individuals who attended one or both days of the group's meeting.) On behalf of the AMT, Dr. Bill Walker, Director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, delivered the new group's charge. Dr. Walker identified two main purposes or goals for the group: 1) To share and collaborate on lessons and experiences, and 2) To begin the cross-state dialog about how to move from response to resilience. Dr. Walker also issued a set of specific challenges to the group:

- Think science to operations. How do we apply what we know and learn?
- Be integrators with the other Priority Issues Teams.
- Assess the gaps in the group's membership.
- Track, review, contribute to, and apply the results of the resilience actions in the Governors' Action Plan.
- Coordinate with other parts of the Alliance, especially the RRCT.
- Identify new actions / opportunities for the next action plan.

Initial Discussion about Roles and Activities

After receiving the charge, attendees spent the balance of the afternoon brainstorming about the working group's charge, membership and target audience, and about potential activities and products the group might pursue. (Appendix B provides the raw notes from this discussion.) Several key topics were covered:

- Role of the working group: The charge was discussed, and specifically the intended scope of the new working group. It was agreed that Alliance leadership has given the group the latitude to define the scope. Attendees discussed whether they wanted to focus on internal integration across the Alliance PITs, or if they wanted to take a broader approach of working with a wide range of partners and resiliency programs in the Gulf of Mexico region. While the issue of scope was not fully resolved at this meeting, participants did talk about identifying some new action steps beyond what is already in the Governors' Action Plan, and about working with partners not yet involved with the Alliance.
- Gaps in membership: Attendees talked about including planners from each state, emergency managers, social scientists with expertise on communities, and federal agencies (including agencies not yet involved with the Alliance.)
- Need to define terms: The group discussed the importance of defining terms such as resilience and mitigation, and agreed to look for existing definitions. Attendees said the definition of resilience should include saving cultures as well as lives and property.
- Need to define audience: Local decision-makers were identified as a key audience for the resilience group, but additional potential audiences were also discussed. For example, Congress was identified as an audience related to the Alliance's goal of securing resources to implement priority actions.
- Sharing information across states can provide immediate value, and a starting point: Attendees agreed it would be valuable to begin by looking at what each state is doing related to resilience, identifying the agencies involved as well as existing policies, programs, and tools. In the short-term this will allow the group to identify and share best practices and good examples, and then the group can begin to identify regional commonalities and develop practices and tools that will work across the Gulf region.
- Existing information is not applied: There is already a substantial amount of information related to resilience, and resources for assessing and enhancing resilience, but unfortunately these are not being applied by local decision-makers. This gap is a key challenge for the group to consider.

At the end of the first day, Dr. Rod Emmer offered to report out for the group the following morning, and also volunteered to take the lead on gathering information from members about each state's existing resilience-related policies, programs, and tools.

Wednesday, July 11th

Day two of the meeting started with a plenary, and each of the PITs reported out on the previous day's discussions. Dr. Emmer reported for the new Resilience Working Group, reviewing the group's charge and outcomes of the first day's discussions. (See Appendix C for the text of the report out.)

Joint Session with the Regional Restoration & Conservation Team

Following the plenary, the Resilience Working Group met together with the RRCT. The session began with introductions so everyone could get a feel for the expertise of the two groups. RRCT members then provided a briefing on the history, goals, and activities of their group. The RRCT explained that they had initiated the call for the new resilience group because they recognized the need for additional expertise to address the resilience-related action steps in the Governor's Action Plan. The RRCT emphasized their desire to work closely with the new working group, highlighting the connections between resilience and restoration and conservation goals. The two groups discussed the intersections between these issues, and

agreed there should be continued dialog. It was proposed that several interested individuals might serve as “integrators,” participating in both groups and sharing relevant information. Finally, the groups discussed the need to reach out to emergency management agencies, drawing upon these entities’ expertise and resources in the areas of recovery and mitigation. Several individuals emphasized the importance of focusing the dialog with emergency managers on long-term resilience rather than short-term response issues.

Resilience Working Group Logistics: Co-chairs, Next Meeting, Initial Information Gathering

During a final afternoon session, the Resilience Working Group discussed how to move forward, and made several decisions about how the group will operate:

- Co-chairs: Tina Shumate of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and Dr. Rod Emmer of Louisiana SeaGrant graciously volunteered to co-chair the new group.
- Next Meeting: Tina Shumate offered to host the next meeting in Mississippi in September. (Following the meeting attendees were polled for a preferred date, and the 2nd meeting will be held on September 17-19 in Biloxi.)
- Agenda items for next meeting: The September meeting will be the first in a series of state workshops, and will highlight existing programs and practices from Mississippi and Alabama. Attendees also requested that this meeting include presentations from federal agencies on their efforts to implement the resilience action steps in the Governor’s Action Plan. (The raw notes in Appendix B include a host of potential agenda items, and the group recognized that some of these may have to wait for future meetings.)
- Initial information gathering activity: The group agreed to collect baseline information on each state’s policy framework related to resilience, and on specific programs and tools, before the September meeting. Dr. Emmer will lead this effort, sending a template to members by the first week of August.
- Additional members: A number of individuals who intend to participate in the working group could not attend this first meeting. These members will bring additional needed expertise, including emergency management experience at the state and federal levels. Several attendees said they would also explore recruiting additional individuals from their states to fill out the group’s membership.
- Working website will be used to share information: NOAA hosts a “working website” for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (<http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/>), and this site includes a page dedicated to resilience-related information and activities (http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/restoration/coastal_resil/welcome.html). The group discussed using this site as well as an email distribution list for sharing information.

The meeting ended with some additional dialog about what constitutes community resilience, and about current issues related to resilience. (Appendix B provides raw notes.) Attendees reiterated the need to define resiliency as part of defining the role of the new group. Smart growth and insurance were identified as important topics to consider as the group moves forward. The co-chairs adjourned the meeting on schedule, with a reminder that a request for information will be circulating before the next meeting in September.

Appendix A
Resilience Working Group Attendees

John Bowie	EPA Gulf of Mexico Program
Todd Davison	NOAA Coastal Services Center
Michele Deshotels	Louisiana CPRA Integrated Planning Team
Robert Deyle	Florida State University
Rod Emmer	Louisiana SeaGrant
Christian Ercolani	Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Jay Gamble	USACE SWD
Nikola Garber	NOAA SeaGrant
Phillip Hinesley	Alabama State Lands (CZM)
Steve Jones	Geological Survey of Alabama
Kevin Kirsch	NOAA Office of Response & Restoration
Barbara Lausche	Mote Marine Policy Institute
Dawn Lavoie	USGS, New Orleans
Lynn Martin	USACE
Charles Pattison	1000 Friends of Florida
Barbara Poore	USGS, St. Petersburg
Ralph Rayburn	Texas SeaGrant
Heidi Recksiek	NOAA Coastal Services Center
Robert Ryan	NASA, Stennis (contract)
Tina Sanchez	South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
Steve Sempier	NOAA SeaGrant
Tina Shumate	Mississippi Dept. of Marine Resources
Michael Spranger	Florida SeaGrant
LaDon Swann	Mississippi-Alabama SeaGrant
Ronnie Taylor	NOAA National Geodetic Survey
Glade Woods	Northern Gulf Institute

Appendix B

Raw Notes

Gulf Region Opportunities, Gaps in Membership

- Need a planning person from each state
- Bob Patterson from University of Texas, Walk Peacock of Texas A&M
- Need type of person who talks to local decision-makers
- Local emergency managers and state/federal emergency managers
- Community experts / social scientists – people who can talk about communities and how communities interact with the landscape
- All federal agencies, including those not yet committed to the Alliance
- Need to distinguish amongst resilience and mitigation
- Could have sub-teams
- Need to look at incentives and disincentives – what motivates local governments?
- Start with a benchmark assessment, then don't make it worse
- Need to discuss terminology
- How does this interface with the salons CSC has held – was some good discussion of definition at the Boulder salon
- Group needs to work on defining both 1) who we're doing it for, and 2) terminology
- Putting together a report to acquire resources/funding is one part of the charge
- Congress is an audience
- There's a lot of information and resources out there, but there's a gap – they're not being applied by local level decision-makers
- Gap analysis could be useful – who's doing what and where are the gaps?
- Need to talk to [Louisiana] policy juror level folks – if reach them, reach the population – they take the message out
- Don't get bogged down on definitions – use whatever is going into new laws, use existing definitions
- After a storm, for local officials it's about saving lives and saving money
- It's also about saving cultures – saving what we are
- Messages have to be site-specific/tailored
- Would be good to identify things people can do *now*. People are willing to act now.
- Mote Marine Lab policy group focusing on four counties, and specifically on county commissioners and heads of chambers of commerce.
- Sea level rise dialog is different from the hurricane/surge dialog
- Alliance matrix is one model for “product”
- There's value in sharing information across states immediately
- Six things on the matrix are inventory activities, but R.2-4 and R.2-7 are thinking tasks. We can be creative with these – are about a management tool and methodology
- May need to first look at what each state is doing – this could be our starting point. Then can identify regional commonalities.
- Makes sense to look at state policies at beginning. LA example makes clear FL is very different in that they have information on construction guidelines post storm.
- Need to get a handle on the differences so can up with things that will work everywhere.
- Find the *right* things the states have done, find the commonalities and share – each state has good things to share.
- Identifying and sharing best practices would be valuable.

How does the group want to move forward?

- Tina and Rod will be co-chairs
- MS will host first of a series of state workshops in September/October. Will cover MS and AL. 2-day meeting, allow travel time at start and finish.

MS Workshop: Topics for Presentations/Discussions: (may have to save some for next meeting)

- Coastal Storms Program
- CSC Salons
- Report on R.2 actions [from Governors' Action Plan]
- Regarding R.2-2 and R.2-3, USGS can present on work to date (SLR mapping, etc.)
- NGS can present on elevation work
- What does AL have?
- What does MS have?
- Info from MEMA/FEMA (Charles Stallings, Debbie P.)
- Non-governmental organization data/information
- MMS economic data
- USFWS National Hunting and Fishing Survey
- Stennis GIS data
- MS GIS data
- NOEP Katrina economic impacts info
- Definition discussion: what we mean by resilience (kicked off with presentation from salons' discussion about current definition thinking – how know it? How measure it?)
- USACE Mobile District – MSCiP Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program (Susan Rees) – also updating levee datums
- NFIP representative might be good too (CNAI) – Al Goodman might be good (NFIP coordinator)
- NERRs
- NEPs
- IBHS (Todd has contact) – need rep and need insurance issue on agenda at some point
- Would be good to have Chamber attend re: Mobile resilience pilot
- CSC GoMex Needs Assessment – present the resilience section

Closing Dialog:

- Resilience is about communities
- Resilience is about smart growth
- We're free to redefine definition and recommend to the AMT
- Dr. Walker said "go forth and make it happen" – have freedom to make it what makes sense
- Communities and how to make resilient is at top of list in LA, right along with restoration. Understand need to integrate protection and restoration.
- Community also includes the natural assets
- Need to explain why resilience should be defined more broadly
- 4th objective of LA CPRA plan was protecting culture – resonated w/ people across state
- NRCS presentation at TX RRCT meeting by a social economist was useful
- Education/outreach needs to be grassroots, in communities. As Resilience group progresses, may want to think about grass roots workshops with community leaders to change attitudes

- Interface b/w mitigation and insurance is biggest issue in FL – let's recruit someone from IBHS. In FL state insurer is largest insurer now. Expanding reinsurance fund now – inland folks paying for coastal...
- Insurance industry is interested in resilience. IBHS now has a land use committee. Talking about risk-rate based on where people live. Also talking about incentivizing doing more to encourage communities to act...
- One idea is to establish criteria (legislatively) – if communities meet, then insurers have to provide coverage there. There is interest in regulating the industry...
- NY, Long Island seeing dramatic rate increases. Other states worried about this too...
- LA paying insurers to stay
- Poor land use decisions are driving up insurance
- May spur resilience – if folks can't get insurance, won't build there...
- Can't just buy out everyone (Dauphin Island example)
- HMGP – for first time, AL coastal residents interested in participating – 20 from west end were interested, but FEMA said bunch already mitigated (upgraded, elevated) so not eligible. Suggests may need revisions to Stafford Act.
- Katrina brought home social issues – Mitigation program not designed for low income folks. These folks also affected by insurance costs. CDBG funds can build, but can't get affordable housing insured.
- If move people way inland, still need way to get back down to coast to work. Transportation is another issue.
- Members of MPOs are missing. Do transportation planning, federal hwy dollars. Need to start planning resilience into transportation.
- Bob will talk to Stephanie Bailenson about talking to the DCA Secretary about sending someone to next meeting.
- Insurance issue is very political. Will need to be careful about end results that are Alliance products. This is why important to have somebody from industry at table.
- Need to look at things that can be done with the resources we have available.
- Would be good to identify an outcome for the Alliance 36-month point, and a longer outcome. Two "can-do" items we can start working on now. Some possibilities:
 - Develop management tools (such as R.2-4)
 - Methodology for a resilience index/indicators
 - Identify what's already out there (state of the data) – define knowledge gaps.
- Workshop will help us learn about R2-4, and salons etc. are working on the indicators piece
- If can get management tools to county venues, local government officials, that would be valuable.
- Do we want to focus on economics, continuing that discussion, getting folks on board now?
- Don't have economic tools to show community benefits of restoration
- HMGP projects have to show CBA
- EPA in midst of project to do valuation
- MS Coastal Improvements Project is also looking at economics
- HAZUS allows you to put in dollar values for what's at risk...then can talk about value of something that reduces vulnerability
- Problem is tools aren't available in way that a local gov planning entity can apply and see how different courses of action will impact their vulnerability, see the economics of reducing risk

- Lot of proposals are very place-based. As a Gulf-wide group, how can we take those, package, and get them out? Need to connect the dots.
- Not all things will work same everywhere. Amount of surge reduction get with wetland restoration will vary from place to place.
- We're trying to do things Gulf-wide, but very place-based with things talking about.
- Place-based efforts are pilots, case studies. Need to tailor when move to new location.
- Despite differences across locations, there are commonalities in processes go through. Local pilots both inform other places' processes, and folks like knowing that someone is working on this... Good way to get local leaders to focus.
- Tools allow us to do certain things, but ultimately comes down to people. Need people fostering the change. Person has to take the case study to the community region wide.
- Clearinghouse idea.
- Mobile Chamber working on community resilience project. GIS mapping (Michael Gallis' planning process.) Private sector is pushing, involved.
- If have ideas on what else group might work on, please send to Rod/Tina
- Research part is important. Is that an area we want to tackle? Might be wise to follow SeaGrant Gulf-wide research priorities process underway. How get involved in other people's activities so don't have to reinvent wheel...
- Ronnie has info on SLR...
- Where does IOOS stand it this? Might be good to have GCOOS person – maybe follow up with Mike Spranger about this... GCOOS has been talking about need for sensors/buoys in Gulf. GOMA might push for this too...can help with storm issues
- Is important to talk about definitions when get back together...
- LA Speaks effort has done what Mobile pilot is moving towards...
- Re:membership of group, might be good to have rep from each Gulf SeaGrant program as well as each of the CZM programs. Could help form good network that would both identify needs from local on-the-ground folks and help bring tools/info back down.
- CZM programs might be initial representatives on coastal hazards... bring in emergency managers later on
- Surge area for LA is larger than the coastal zone.
- CZM programs are funding hazards work more. Help counties, cities do work.
- Southeast CZM mtg in Lafayette in Nov – looking for panels – Greg DuCote and Josh Lott POCs. R-2 might be good topic – small delegation. Nov. 6-8
- ICOSRMI – meeting in August in Biloxi, Southern Governors' Association – planning an Alliance meeting with the Gulf Governors

Appendix C

Report Out From Day One

Charge to the Resilience Working Group:

- A chance to share and collaborate on lessons and experiences.
- Begin the cross-state dialog about how to move from response to resilience.

Specific charges/challenges to the group:

- Think science to operations. How do we apply what we know and learn?
- Be integrators with the other Priority Issues Teams
- Assess the gaps in the group's membership.
- Track, review, contribute to, and apply the results of the resilience actions in the Governors' Action Plan.
- Coordinate with other parts of GOMA, especially the Regional Restoration Coordination Team (RRCT).
- Identify new actions / opportunities for the next action plan.

Priority Issues:

1. Collect information by states:
 - a. Best practices
 - b. Lessons learned
 - c. Processes
 - d. Deliverables
2. Needs of the five states, for example, hazards-mitigation-insurance
3. Ask our team to "bring a friend", but someone who will be a worker, not an "attender."
4. Ask our team to identify from 1 to 5 things we need to make the Resiliency Working Group successful (For example, data on selected topics.)
5. Need a dedicated full-time person to make this work.